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RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2396
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2127
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1649
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1631
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4794
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 1363
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 0617
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000452

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/PD (FOR LNEIGHBORS/GMCLOUGHLIN)
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SUBJECT: BURMA -- USG-SPONSORED CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE IN
JAKARTA

REF: JAKARTA 120 AND PREVIOUS

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¶1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified -- Please handle accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: An intensive USG-sponsored conference on "The Role of ASEAN Civil Society in Supporting Human Rights and Democracy in Burma" will take place in Jakarta March 6-7. Over 20 regional experts will participate. The conference will focus on how the Burmese situation is a threat to the region, and speakers will address such topics as human rights, the need for a democratic transition, as well as human trafficking and economic stability. Organized by Indonesian civil society with EAP/PD funding, the conference will conclude with a declaration. We already understand that the Canadian government and NDI plan follow up events. END SUMMARY.

CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

¶3. (SBU) Regional civil society leaders and scholars will gather in Indonesia March 6-7 for a conference on how Burma's current situation impacts on the security, health, and prosperity of the region. The conference is being funded by EAP/PD with assistance from the National Democratic Institute (NDI). It is being organized by a coalition of Indonesian activists. Opened by Indonesia's most prominent human rights lawyer, Rafendi Djamin, chair of Human Rights Working Group, the conference will lead off with a keynote address by Indonesian Parliamentarian Djoko Susilo, the head of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC). A Burmese monk who left Burma after the September uprising, U Awbata, is traveling to the conference from Sri Lanka and will make opening inspirational remarks.

¶4. (SBU) The first session on "The Current Problem in Burma" will be facilitated by Galuh Wandita, director of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), in

Jakarta. Nyo Ohn Myint of the Asia Pacific People's Partnership on Burma (APPPB) will talk about the background of the present situation and noted scholar Win Min of Chiang Mai University will talk on current issues.

15. (SBU) There will also be a session on "Burma as a Regional Problem." Speakers include:

- Debbie Stothard, Coordinator with Altsean-Burma (an NGO focused on regional Burmese matters) and authority on Burma transnational issues, speaking about regional security;
- Duncan McArthur with the Thailand Burma Border Coalition, who has worked in the border region since 1995, speaking on migration, refugees, and human trafficking;
- Dr. Voravit Suwanvanichkij of John Hopkins University, an expert on the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases resulting from the Burmese situation, speaking on drugs and disease;
- Zaw Oo from American University and policy advisor to the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, speaking on regional economic impacts; and,
- Wong Aung, global coordinator for the Shwe Gas Movement, speaking on capital investment and the role of economic sanctions.

16. (SBU) Turning to international responses to the Burma crisis, speakers include: Egoy Bans of the Free Burma Coalition; U.S. Embassy Political Counselor Joseph L. Novak reviewing the U.S. reaction; Roshan Jason, director of the AIPMC in Malaysia; and, Patrick Burgess, of ICTJ Asia. The topic of "Civil Society Responses and Options for Future Action" will be reviewed by several regional and Indonesia civil society activists from human rights groups, the media and labor unions.

17. (SBU) On day two, conference participants will break into
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working groups to recommend strategies on how to bring about democracy in Burma and how to support that transition. A declaration and recommended follow-up actions will be announced at the closing session, followed by a press conference.

MEDIA

18. (SBU) The media is invited to attend the opening session and the reading of the final declaration, and is welcome to cover all plenary sessions. PAS is videotaping the main events throughout the conference and plans to produce a short documentary on DVD for regional distribution, as well as to provide broadcast quality video for TV stations which are interested but could not attend. Attendees will all be given background material on issues to be covered at the conference, including the President's February 25 statement on Burma and other U.S. policy articles.

19. (SBU) While the USG role in the conference will be low key, the DCM will be holding a dinner for organizers and participants, Pol/C will present the U.S. policy viewpoint at one session, and our sponsorship will be recognized on logos on conference materials. Mission is working with IIP to produce articles on the conference. PAS also will send photos of the conference to IIP and to other Posts in the region with captions.

NEXT STEPS

110. (SBU) As mentioned, participants will issue a declaration which will also review follow-up activities. We already understand that the Canadian government plans to convene a conference in late March in Quebec City focused on Burma (this conference is, in part, directly modeled on the Jakarta conference). NDI also is planning upcoming Burma-related events in the East Asian region.

¶11. (SBU) Overall, participants in the conference--many of whom were recruited with help from other Missions in the region--told us that holding the event in Indonesia is significant because of its influence in the region and the fact that it recently moved to democracy from an authoritarian set-up. We hope that the conference will resonate regionwide, helping stimulate civil society/citizen activism on the situation and the need for a change in the Burmese status quo.

HUME